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outer ring 30, and the part spherical housing 6 provide a means by which the towed trailer has substantially more freedom of movement both vertically and horizontally relative to the towing vehicle than has been produced or allowed by any prior art.

In the Claims:

SC Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Once Amended) An improved trailer hitching apparatus

comprising:

a plurality of connected guide walls which converge forwardly into a housing shaped like a portion of a sphere and having a substantially circular opening into said housing where said guide walls converge;

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means attached to said housing for mounting said apparatus to a towing vehicle;

a double-ring coupler device having two substantially annulus-shaped rings, formed so that one outer ring houses the other inner ring as follows: the outer convex surface of said inner ring has the same curvature shape as the inner concave surface of said outer ring, with said outer ring somewhat overlapping said inner ring to hold them together operationally, allowing said outer ring to rotate freely on any axis about said inner ring;

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a shaft attached to said outer ring having means to attach said coupler device to a trailer tongue;

said housing having an inner surface with the same curvature as the outer surface of said outer ring so that said outer ring can rotate freely and smoothly about any axis within said housing;

said housing having circular surface openings situated opposite each other and said inner ring of said coupler device having a circular hole which aligns with said surface openings as means for insertion of a locking pin device to securely engage said double-ring coupler device within said housing.

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2. (Once Amended) An improved trailer hitching apparatus comprising:

a rectangular hitch socket for mounting to a towing vehicle;

first and second wall portions in opposed, spaced apart relation;

a shaft having a rearward portion operatively connected to said first and second wall portions and having a rectangular forward portion configured to engage said rectangular hitch socket for mounting said apparatus to a towing vehicle;

an outer, substantially annulus-shaped ring having inner walls defining an opening, said inner walls having a concave configuration, said

outer ring being configured to be received between said opposed first and second wall portions;

an inner, substantially annulus-shaped ring, said inner ring having an opening and an outer convex surface, said inner ring being positioned within said opening of said outer ring, said outer convex surface of said inner ring having substantially the same curvature as said inner concave walls of said outer ring, and said outer ring somewhat overlapping said inner ring to hold them together operationally such that said outer ring can rotate freely on any axis about said inner ring, said inner and outer rings together forming a coupler device;

means attached to said outer ring for attaching said coupler device to a trailer; and

a locking pin operatively associated with said opposed first and second wall portions and configured to be received through said opening in said inner ring when said coupler device is disposed between said opposed first and second wall portions so as to couple said coupler device to said means for mounting said apparatus to a towing vehicle.

3. (Once Amended) The trailer hitching apparatus of Claim 2, further comprising a housing, wherein said housing includes an opening configured to receive an end of said coupler device therethrough, and wherein said first and second wall portions comprise opposed walls of said housing.

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6. (Once Amended) The trailer hitching apparatus of Claim 5, wherein said outer ring has an outer convex surface with the same general curvature as the curved inner surface of said housing such that said outer ring can rotate freely and smoothly about any axis within said housing.-

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7. (Once Amended) The trailer hitching apparatus of Claim 3, wherein said housing is part spherical in shape, and wherein said opening is substantially circular in shape.--

8. (Once Amended) The trailer hitching apparatus of Claim 7, wherein said housing has a part spherical inner surface, and wherein said outer ring has an outer convex surface with the same general curvature as the inner surface of said housing such that said outer ring can rotate freely and smoothly about any axis within said part spherical housing.

9 (Once Amended) The trailer hitching apparatus of Claim 3, wherein said housing comprises an aperture therethrough through which an end of said locking pin is inserted, and wherein said housing comprises an engagement means situated opposite said aperture for engaging said end of said locking pin;

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whereby when said locking pin extends through said aperture, through said opening in said inner ring, and engages said engagement means, said locking pin couples said coupler device to said housing.

10. (Once Amended) The improved trailer hitching apparatus of Claim 3, further comprising a plurality of connected guide walls operatively associated with said housing and converging forwardly about said opening.

Please add the following new claims:

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11. (New) An improved trailer hitching apparatus comprising:

a housing having a horizontal cross-section substantially in the shape of a partial circle, said housing having first and second wall portions in opposed, spaced apart relation, and said housing having an opening configured to receive an end of said coupler device therethrough, means attached to said first and second wall portions for mounting said apparatus to a towing vehicle;

an outer, substantially annulus-shaped ring having inner walls defining an opening, said inner walls having a concave configuration, said outer ring being configured to be received between said opposed first and second wall portions;

an inner, substantially annulus-shaped ring, said inner ring having an opening and an outer convex surface, said inner ring being positioned

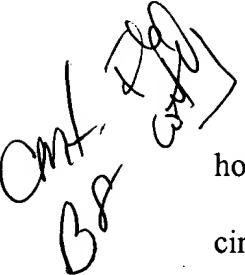
within said opening of said outer ring, said outer convex surface of said inner ring having substantially the same curvature as said inner concave walls of said outer ring, and said outer ring somewhat overlapping said inner ring to hold them together operationally such that said outer ring can rotate freely on any axis about said inner ring, said inner and outer rings together forming a coupler device;

means attached to said outer ring for attaching said coupler device to a trailer; and

a locking pin operatively associated with said opposed first and second wall portions of said housing and configured to be received through said opening in said inner ring when said coupler device is disposed between said opposed first and second wall portions so as to couple said coupler device to said means for mounting said apparatus to a towing vehicle.--

--12. (New) The trailer hitching apparatus of Claim 11, wherein said locking pin extends along an axis, and wherein said housing comprises walls configured to guide said coupler device into a position such that said opening of said inner ring is aligned with said axis defined by said locking pin.--


--13. (New) The trailer hitching apparatus of Claim 12, wherein said outer ring has an outer convex surface with the same general curvature as the curved inner surface of said housing such that said outer ring can rotate freely and smoothly about any axis within said housing.--


--14. (New) The trailer hitching apparatus of Claim 11, wherein said housing has a part spherical shape, and wherein said opening is substantially circular in shape.--

--15. (New) The trailer hitching apparatus of Claim 14, wherein said housing has a part spherical inner surface, and wherein said outer ring has an outer convex surface with the same general curvature as the inner surface of said housing such that said outer ring can rotate freely and smoothly about any axis within said part spherical housing.--

--16. (New) The trailer hitching apparatus of Claim 13,
wherein said housing comprises an aperture therethrough through
which an end of said locking pin is inserted, and
wherein said housing comprises an engagement means situated
opposite said aperture for engaging said end of said locking pin;